

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3533
INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
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E.O. 11652: N/A
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SUBJ: AGAPOV AFFAIR

REF: STOCKHOLM 1369

1. ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER AND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER ULA ULLSTEN
SUMMONED THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ON APRIL
11 TO PLEAD THE CASE OF THE AGAPOV FAMILY. THE PLIGHT OF THE
AGAPOVS HAS DOMINATED THE SWEDISH HEADLINES FOR THE PAST
TEN DAYS. (IT HAS BEEN FEATURED FROM TIME TO TIME SINCE 1975.)
AGAPOV HAS BECOME A HOUSEHOLD WORD IN SWEDEN, SYMBOLIC OF SOVIET
NON-COMPLIANCE WITH ITS HELSINKI OBLIGATIONS.

2. VALETIN AGAPOV DEFECTED TO SWEDEN IN 1974 AND SINCE THEN
HAS MADE SEVERAL ABORTIVE ATTEMPTS TO BRING OUT HIS WIFE,
DAUGHTER AND AGED MOTHER. HE HAS SOUGHT ASSISTANCE, SO FAR
TO NO AVAIL, FROM (AMONG OTHERS) THE GOS, THE UN, THE RED
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CROSS, THE US CSCE COMMISSION AND THE MEDIA. THE MOST RECENT
ESCAPE ATTEMPT OCCURRED ON MARCH 30 WHEN A SWEDISH PILOT TOOK
OFF FROM FINLAND, LANDED ON SOVIET TERRITORY, FAILED TO MAKE
CONTACT WITH THE WAITING AGAPOVS, AND RETURNED SOLO TO FINLAND.
THE SWEDISH PILOT HAS BEEN CHARGED BY FINNISH AUTHORITIES
WITH BORDER VIOLATIONS AND FACES A POSSIBLE FOUR YEARS IMPRI-
SONMENT. (HE HAS BEEN FEATURED IN THE SWEDISH MEDIA AS SOME-

THING OF A HERO.)

3. AT THE TIME OF HER HUSBAND'S DEFECTION, MRS. AGAPOV WAS AN ENGINEER IN A PLANT WHICH MANUFACTURED PARTS FOR THE SOVIET-AMERICAN JOINT SPACE PROJECT. THE SOVIETS HAVE BARRED HER FROM EMIGRATING BECAUSE OF HER ALLEGED ACCESS TO CLASSIFIED INFORMATION. SHE HAS SINCE REPORTEDLY BEEN DISMISSED FROM A JOB AS A LAVATORY ATTENDANT AND FACES CHARGES OF "PARACITISM". ACCORDING TO SWEDISH PRESS REPORTS OUT OF MOSCOW, SHE IS NOW TRYING TO HITCH HER CAUSE TO THAT OF SOVIET POLITICAL DISSIDENTS. MEANWHILE, AGAPOV'S MOTHER, IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE MOST RECENT SOVIET REFUSAL OF AN EXIT VISA ON APRIL 10, IN A WELL-PLANNED (I.E. DRAMATIC SUICIDE NOTE) AND HIGHLY PUBLICIZED SUICIDE OUTSIDE SOVIET OFFICES, DRANK A LETHAL POTION OF ACID. SHE NOW LIES IN A MOSCOW HOSPITAL IN CRITICAL CONDITION.

4. COMMENT: ULLSTEN IS NOT THE FIRST MAJOR SWEDISH POLITICAL FIGURE TO INTERCEDE WITH THE SOVIETS ON AGAPOV'S BEHALF. FM SODER TOOK UP ISSUE WITH SOVIET CHARGE LAST YEAR AND IN 1976 FORMER PM PALME MADE A DIRECT APPEAL TO KOSYGIN ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS. PRIME MINISTER FALLDIN THIS WEEK ANNOUNCED THAT EFFORTS WILL CONTINUE ON THE AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL, BOTH IN STOCKHOLM AND MOSCOW, AND HE PLANS TO DISCUSS THE MATTER FURTHER WITH PM SODER WHEN SHE RETURNS FROM HANOI NEXT WEEK. MFA UNDER SECRETARY LEIF LEIFLAND WILL BE IN MOSCOW SHORTLY, WHEN THE MATTER WILL LIKELY BE RAISED. FM SODER WILL ACCOMPANY THE SWEDISH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ROYAL COUPLE TO THE SOVIET UNION IN JUNE, PRESENTING STILL ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THE CASE.

5. THE AGAPOV CASE REMAINS A FESTERING SORE IN SWEDISH-SOVIET RELATIONS, ERUPTING WITH PERIODIC REGULARITY AND SUBJECTING THE SOVIET HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD TO THE SCRUTINY OF THE ENTIRE SWEDISH PUBLIC. AS THE DEPARTMENT KNOWS FROM PREVIOUS REPORTING, OUR KNOWLEDGEABLE MFA FRIENDS FEEL THAT THERE WERE TIMES WHEN THE SOVIETS WERE MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION ON THE AGAPOVS, BUT PUBLICITY ALWAYS INTERVENED AT THE WRONG TIME AND THE SOVIETS OBVIOUSLY FEEL THEY CANNOT BE SHOWN AS FORCED INTO LETTING SOMEONE GO. QUIET DIPLOMACY IN THIS CASE HAS NEVER HAD A CHANCE TO WORK, AND THE CONTINUING PUBLICITY SEEMS TO INSURE THAT IT WILL NOT. OF COURSE THE SOVIETS ARE TAKING A LOT OF HARD KNOCKS IN PUBLIC OPINION MEANWHILE, AND IT LOOKS AS IF THIS WILL CONTINUE.
KENNEDY-MINOTT

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